

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action mailed September 11, 2007. Claims 1-3 and 5 remain pending in the application and stand rejected. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended herein. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 1 was objected to with respect to the status identifier set forth in the amendment filed February 26, 2007. The status identifier was inadvertently indicated to be "original" when it should have read "currently amended." The current listing of claims presents claim 1 with the amendments to that claim incorporated therein, since the amendment was entered. Proper status identifiers are used in this amendment.

Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs, with respect to the reference to standards for a K-section V-belt set forth in claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended herein to include dimensional features of SAE J1459, the only SAE standard that specifies dimensions for making K-section V-belts. Applicant submits that persons skilled in the art would have understood that this was the reference referred to in the specification. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by the amendment to claim 1, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, and 5 each depend from claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 2, 3, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above for claim 1.

Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,840,607 to Hitchcock et al. in view of European Patent Application No. 0 346 676. Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hitchcock '607 in view of EP 0 346 676, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,647,278 to Hull. Claim 1 is the only independent claim of this rejected group and is directed to a multiple rib V-belt. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate dimensions of standard K-section V-belts, namely "a pitch between grooves of approximately 0.14 inch." Claim 2 was amended to make the language of claim 2 consistent with the language of claim 1.

Applicant asserts that persons skilled in the art would not have been motivated to modify the standard K-section V-belt referred to in Hitchcock '607 to have a thickness and groove depth as set forth in claim 1 in view of EP 0 346 676 because the belts discussed in EP 0 346 676 are not K-section V-belts. Rather, the belts discussed in EP 0 346 676 are a wholly different type of belt, having a pitch between grooves of 2.34 mm (0.09 inch). Because the belts of EP 0 346 676 are not K-section V-belts, there is no reasonable guarantee of success that modifying the K-section V-belts of Hitchcock '607, as alleged by the Examiner, would result in belts that are fit for their intended use. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 1 over

Hitchcock '607 in view of EP 0 346 676 be withdrawn.

Claims 2 depends from claim 1 and is therefore in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above for claim 1. Claim 5 also depends from claim 1 and is in condition for allowance for the same reasons, and because the further combination with Hull '278 fails to cure the deficiencies of Hitchcock '607 and EP 0 346 676. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 2 and 5 be withdrawn.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hitchcock '607. Claim 3 depends from independent claim 1 and is in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1. The Examiner alleges that it would have been obvious to modify the conventional K-section V-belts discussed in Hitchcock '607 to arrive at the claimed invention, in an effort to discover optimum or workable ranges. Applicant notes that the Examiner's rationale fails to recognize that the claimed invention results in an unexpected increase in flex life of the K-section V-belts, as discussed in the Application at page 6, lines 8-13. Because persons skilled in the art would have expected that further reduction of the overall thickness of the belt would result in a decrease in flex life, there would be no motivation to try to reduce the thickness of the belts as alleged by the Examiner. For at least these additional reasons, Applicant submits that the Office Action fails to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 3 and respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 3 over Hitchcock '607 be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments to the claims and the remarks set forth herein, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this amendment. If the Examiner believes that any matter requires further discussion, the Examiner is respectfully asked to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the issue may be promptly resolved. The Examiner's prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due in connection with this submission. However, if any additional fees are necessary to complete this communication, the Commissioner may consider this to be a request for such and charge any necessary fees to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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